

Exploring the Impact of Degree Major on Career Outcomes for College Graduates with Visual Impairments

What Were We Trying to Learn?

We aimed to explore how college degree majors and other factors like age, gender, and additional disabilities predict employment rates and earnings for college graduates with visual impairments compared to those without. We intended to uncover if certain majors lead to different earnings for those with visual impairments compared to the general population.

How Was This Project Carried Out?

We used data from the 2015–2019 American Community Survey and analyzed the employment status and earnings of college-educated adults with and without visual impairments. We looked at various factors, including degree major, demographics, and socioeconomic characteristics, to see how they influenced employment and earnings. We utilized regression techniques to determine the relative importance of the factors.

What Are the Most Important Things We Learned?

We found that people with visual impairments were slightly more likely to hold degrees in two of the lowest-earning broad degree major categories (Education and Consumer Services & Recreation) and less likely to hold degrees in two of the highest-earning categories (Engineering and Biological, Agricultural, & Environmental Sciences) than the general population. However, although a specific degree major does have some influence, it is not as important in determining employment and earnings outcomes as other factors like age, gender, additional disabilities, and having an advanced degree. These other factors were clearly more strongly associated with career outcomes than degree majors.

Certain specific degree majors were associated with a greater likelihood of employment and higher earnings potential, and the earnings patterns were generally the same for college graduates with and without visual impairments. Even when controlling for degree major and other factors, college graduates with visual impairments had substantially lower average earnings than the general population.

How Do These Findings Relate to Me?

For individuals with visual impairments, these findings spotlight the importance of considering the employment prospects and earnings associated with specific degree majors. For educators and

Research Takeaway

For college graduates with visual impairments, degree major is one part of the employment outcomes puzzle. However, factors like age, gender, and additional disabilities have a stronger association with their career outcomes than their chosen field of study.

vocational rehabilitation counselors, these results highlight the need to provide comprehensive guidance regarding the impact of degree major on employment and earnings, in addition to support for navigating the challenges posed by additional disabilities and other socioeconomic barriers.

Learn More

Findings were taken from the following articles:

McDonnall, M. C., Cmar, J. L., & McKnight, Z. (2023). [How degree major and demographic factors influence employment and earnings for college graduates with visual impairments.](#) *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*. Advance online publication.

McDonnall, M. C., Cmar, J. L., & McKnight, Z. S. (2023). [College degree majors and associated earnings: Are there differences between people with visual impairments and the general population?](#) *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 59(3), 263–272.

For more information about the research project associated with these publications, visit the [project overview page](#).

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